

Executive Summary for the Pacific Northwest Recreation Resource Advisory Committee

Site: Harralson Horse Camp
Site Type: Expanded Amenity & Standard Amenity
Proposed Action: Change Fee Structure
Recommended Fees: Change from Recreation Pass day use fee to camping fee of \$10/site night.
Add \$5 extra vehicle fee/night.
Recreation Passes would still be required for day use at the trailhead.

Site Description

Harralson Horse Camp is located on the Willamette National Forest, Middle Fork Ranger District about 65 miles east of Eugene, Oregon. Located near the shore of north Waldo Lake, the campground consists of 6 sites with fire rings and picnic tables. The campground is rustic, and new developments have been added over time to offset resource impacts, including addition of a new vault toilet through Secure Rural Schools Act (Payco) funding. The campground roadway and parking are gravel surfaced. Garbage service is provided. The campground is operated from July through October depending on snow. Because horses are not allowed in the North Waldo or Islet developed campgrounds on Waldo Lake, this site attracts people with stock who wish to ride the extensive trail system around the lake and into the Waldo Wilderness Area. Currently, a Recreation Pass is required at the site as a trailhead; however no fees are charged for overnight camping. Fee collection is currently through a self-service pay station at Shadow Bay Campground (a short drive away), or through use of a Recreation Pass. A new self-service fee tube will be installed onsite for either campground or trailhead day use fees.

Fee Assessment

Campground fees have not been established. However, this site has served as a day use facility under REA and a Recreation Pass is required. Recreation Passes for day use would continue to be accepted for trailhead use only. Visitors that pay an overnight camping fee would not need a Recreation Pass for day use on trails out of the campground. The Recreation Site Facility Master Planning process identified the need to change the fee structure to help cover the cost of annual operations & maintenance, and where possible, a portion of the deferred maintenance, as well as an opportunity to upgrade the site to provide a higher quality experience for equestrians.

Utilizing a pricing guide, the campground fee falls in the \$8 to \$14 range. However, considering other providers within the local area, the average market price is \$10 for similar services. Comparable sites providing similar services & amenities range from an \$8 to \$14 camping fee and extra vehicle fees range from \$4 to \$7. The adjusted recommend camping fee of \$10 and a \$5 extra vehicle fee would establish a fee in line with market price. If fees are not added, the campground would continue to be operated and maintained below actual cost. This results in increasing deferred maintenance at this site and within the overall campground program

Currently, many Forest Service volunteers who are members of local equestrian organizations assist with trail maintenance in the Waldo Lake Area. Volunteers who currently camp at the site do not pay a fee because they are provided with a NWFP. There is a perception this fee proposal is moving a “free site” into a fee site although Recreation Passes are currently required. A volunteer pass for overnight use would continue to be provided and honored for volunteers who assist in upkeep of the campground and associated trails in the area.

Public Involvement

Public involvement included notices posted onsite, at the Middle Fork Ranger District visitor information office and on the Willamette NF Website, and was published in the Federal Register. A legal notice was published in the Eugene Register Guard and news articles appeared in two other local newspapers. Federal legislators were also briefed. Public involvement resulted in two non-substantive comments since fees are in line with current market value, amenities provided and cost of operating and maintaining the facility.

Members of the Backcountry Horsemen have met with Forest Service staff to discuss future amenities for Harrelson, as well as potential for partnership in developing and maintaining the campground. Non-potable stock water is a desired addition to the site, which could be supported in part by fees collected there. There is a perception this fee proposal is moving a “free site” into a fee site as mentioned above.